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NEWS RELEASE

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TOPEKA MAN WHO RUMMAGED THROUGH TRASH FOR DISCARDED DOCUMENTS PLEADS GUILTY TO BANK FRAUD

TOPEKA, KAN. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that **Dennis Michael Christiansen**, 40, Topeka, pleaded guilty Oct. 4, 2004, before U.S. District Judge Julie A. Robinson.

Christiansen **pleaded guilty to one count of bank fraud**. In his plea, Christiansen admitted that from August 2003 through Nov. 18, 2003 he executed a scheme to defraud Intrust Bank, Emporia State Bank & Trust, Commerce Bank & Trust, and U.S. Bank. Christiansen admitted he rummaged through trash disposed of by the Kansas Department of Revenue in Topeka, Kan., to gather information he used to create both fictitious Kansas driver's licenses and fictitious checks on a personal computer. He also admitted he negotiated fictitious checks at three businesses in Emporia, Kan., including Wal-Mart, Emporia State Bank and Trust Company and Sutherland's Lumber.

Sentencing is set for 9 a.m. Jan. 10 before Judge Robinson.

Christiansen faces a maximum penalty of 30 years in federal prison and a \$1 million fine. In his plea, he agreed to make full restitution.

Melgren commended the work of the U.S. Secret Service, which investigated the case, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Greg Hough, who is prosecuting.